



## DEPARTMENT OF POLICE MEDIA SERVICES DIVISION

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## **Montgomery County Launches Safe Speed Program: New Residential Automated Speed Enforcement**

*Motorists have a 30-day warning period*

Today, Montgomery County launched the *Safe Speed* program, Maryland's first automated speed enforcement. City and county officials were joined by traffic safety experts and members of law enforcement, this morning in front of Meadow Hall Elementary School in Rockville.

Montgomery County was granted the authority to operate the cameras by the state of Maryland in 2006, to conduct a pilot automated speed limit enforcement program in residential areas and school zones with speed limits of 35 mph or less. Similar automated speed enforcement programs also are being initiated in Chevy Chase Village, and the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg.

"Our goal is safer streets," said Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett. "Speeding is a serious traffic problem that increases the risks of crashes, injuries and deaths. With the introduction of the Safe Speed program, we intend to make Montgomery County safer for both pedestrians and motorists."

The *Safe Speed* program will initially involve six mobile speed enforcement vans equipped with radar cameras. The mobile units will rotate through designated speed enforcement zones which meet the location and speed requirements. Additional fixed cameras will be added at later date.

The cameras will photograph vehicles traveling more than 10 mph above the posted speed limit. Today marks the beginning of a 30-day warning period during which violators will be issued warnings by mail. At the end of the warning period, citations will be issued.

-More-

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/police](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/police)

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Citations will be reviewed to verify the violation and processed to determine the registered owner. The owner of the vehicle will receive a citation in the mail and a \$40 fine. No license points will be assigned and insurance companies will not be notified.

Locations of the cameras — and more information about the program — can be found on the new *Safe Speed* webpage, which can be accessed through the Montgomery County Police Department website with links to each of the other municipalities, Chevy Chase Village, City of Gaithersburg, and City of Rockville, whose police departments will also conduct automated speed enforcement.

"Our top priority is the safety of people who live and work in Montgomery County," said Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger. "Automated speed enforcement gives us one more resource to help protect our citizens by reducing aggressive driving."

Speeding is a significant public safety problem both in Montgomery County and around the state. Speeding-related crashes accounted for 35 percent of all 2005 Maryland traffic fatalities. The public costs of these crashes total over \$732 million. In 2005 alone, 214 people were killed in speeding-related crashes in Maryland, with at least 16 of those deaths occurring in Montgomery County.

"It has been a goal of the Rockville Mayor and Council to try innovative ways to protect pedestrians in our City," said Rockville Mayor Larry Giammo. "We have worked for several years to get the state's approval to try speed cameras. We are confident that in a short time after we start using them, these cameras will show how they are making a difference in slowing speeders in Rockville."

Other participants in today's press conference included: Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews, City of Rockville Mayor Larry Giammo, and AAA Mid-Atlantic Manager of Public & Government Affairs John Townsend.

Excessive speeding is a problem mostly close to home, in our neighborhoods, near our schools, and it puts us all at risk. That is why this narrowly crafted law applies only to roads in school zones and residential areas," said Delegate William A. Bronrott (District 16, Bethesda), who championed passage of the legislation and the override of Governor Ehrlich's veto. "Speeding is not only a life-or-death problem, but also a quality of life concern for a growing number of people in our county who understand that simply trying to cross the street should not be a death-defying act."

Speed camera programs have been successful in reducing speeding and speed-related crashes in communities worldwide. A recent poll conducted in Montgomery County by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that 74 percent of respondents believe speeding is a problem on residential streets, and 59 percent favored the use of speed cameras.

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